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AUTHOR	Seymour, Daniel
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ABSTRACT

Based on a survey of Quality Management (QM) practitioners at 21 colleges, this study presents the 10 most difficult implementation hurdles to QM in higher education and a set of hurdle-clearing strategies. The hurdles are: (1) lack of time to implement QM; (2) perception that QM is something for janitorial and housing staffs but not applicable to professors; (3) perception of QM as another fad that will pass; (4) keeping institutional leadership repeatedly and consistently focused on quality issues; (5) the language of QM, such as the terms "customer" and "total" suggest to many that total quality management belongs to business not to academe; (6) unclear rewards of QM implementation which then fail to generate real commitment; (7) the length of time before seeing real results or real change; (8) for many, a small but vocal number of people may resist and speak out against QM; (9) difficulty in finding the right level of visibility for QM; and (10) reluctance of supervisors and administrators to let go of decision-making power. Two strategies were perceived to be most effective: a training strategy and a political strategy. Other general conclusions were that commitment does not constitute a strategy for implementation, that successful strategies are culture dependent, and that quality managment activities are not quality managment results. An appendix provides methodology details. (JB)

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